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FM AMEMBASSY SKOPJE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4724
INFO RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 4984
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 1917
RUEHTI/AMEMBASSY TIRANA 3412
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 1658
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUESEN/SKOPJE BETA
RUEHSQ/USDAO SKOPJE MK
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2068
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA 4065
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3601

UNCLAS SKOPJE 000517

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [MK](#)

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: ETHNIC ALBANIANS GIVE POLICE A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN WAKE OF FATAL DRIVE-BY SHOOTING

¶1. (U) Three ethnic Albanian youths were killed and six were injured after a drive-by shooting at an internet cafe in the Skopje municipality of Cair late May 18. A Ministry of Interior (MOI) spokesman told the local press on May 22 the police suspect an inter-family blood feud was the motive for the shooting, but that the shooters mistakenly targeted the young victims. MOI officials believe the shooters either fled to Kosovo after the incident, or are hiding in the nearby, predominantly eAlbanian, municipality of Aracinovo.

¶2. (U) Immediately following the killing, which shocked Skopje residents unaccustomed to such random shootings, Cair municipal councilors declared a day of mourning and called on the MOI to increase the police presence in the municipality. The ethnic Albanian Mayor of Cair, a member of the governing coalition junior partner DUI party, announced the city would hire a private security agency to help patrol the Skopje Old Bazaar, which falls within the Cair city limits. On May 24, over one thousand people, mostly ethnic Albanians, held a peaceful, multi-ethnic rally in Cair, calling for an end to violence and for stronger curbs on private possession of firearms.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: The predominantly ethnic Albanian Cair city council's call for increased MOI patrols in the wake of the shootings reflects growing local confidence in the police. An MOI contact on May 26 told us a high level of trust and cooperation has developed between the Cair city administration and the local police department, which he claims is one of the most operationally efficient in the Skopje metropolitan area. He also pointed out that Cair has one of the lowest crime rates in Skopje; therefore, it is unlikely the MOI will increase its police presence in the municipality. With parliamentary elections approaching in early July, we will watch to see if Cair comes to rely on private security services, since such groups sometimes are used by political parties to intimidate voters and opposing parties on election day. End Comment.

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